

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

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Preliminary Report on Survey of Radios, Telephones and Electricity
on Farms - July 1947

Of the 8,400 farms which replied to a questionnaire mailed by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics last July, over eight out of ten have radios, while six out of ten have electricity from a central power station, but less than four out of ten have telephones. Questionnaires were mailed to 15,000 farmers. Census data show that the percentage of the nation's farms having radios and electricity has been increasing sharply since 1930. But the percentage of farms having telephones was smaller in 1930 and 1940 than in 1920. If the survey indications hold true for the nation then the percentage of farms having telephones is now just getting back to the 1920 level. The figures for radios include all those in working order -- battery-operated sets as well as other kinds.

Previous data on these three items have been based on the Census of Agriculture made every five years. The BAE survey was a part of the basis for estimates on electrification published in October by the Rural Electrification Administration, which are repeated in this report. The BAE sample data have been summarized in terms of the nation as a whole, nine geographical regions, and for 31 States. The sample in the other 17 States was too small for estimates of percentages within the States.

In 1930, barely 20 percent of the nation's farms had radios; less than 10 percent had electricity; and 34 percent had telephones. Ten years later, 60 percent had radios, about 50 percent had electricity but only 25 percent had telephones. In 1945, nearly three-quarters of the farms had radios, nearly half had electricity, but still not quite a third had telephones. From 1930 on, the West and the North have been consistently above these United States averages while the South has been below. But the trends have been about the same throughout the country.

Of the nine geographical regions listed in the table on the other side, the Pacific Coast farms which replied show the largest percentage having radios and electricity. The survey shows the largest percentage of farms with telephones in New England. In each region an average of at least seven farmers out of ten who replied have radios. The sample in the East South Central States showed the smallest proportion of farms with electricity - 41 percent; while the South Atlantic States showed the smallest proportion with telephones - 12 percent.

Of the 31 States for which survey data were summarized, Washington leads in the percentage of farms having radios, with 96 percent of those answering the questionnaire. In 14 other States at least 9 out of 10 farms which replied have radios. In all the States at least two thirds of the farms which replied had radios. New Jersey and Washington lead in the proportion of farms with electricity from a central power station - each with 95 percent. New York is a close third. Of the States for which survey data on telephones were adequate, Iowa is the only one where eight out of ten farms reported telephones. Illinois and Kansas follow, with over seven farms out of ten reporting telephones.

North Dakota had the smallest percentage of farms with electricity from a central power station -- 16 percent. South Dakota ranks next to the lowest on this count, with 18 percent, and Mississippi next with 33 percent. In 6 of the 12 Southern States less than one farm in ten reported having telephone service.

DEC 30 1947

Percent of Farms Having Radios, Telephones, and Electricity, July 1947, by States

State or Group of States	Percent of Farms Having		
	Radios (in working order) ^{2/}	Telephones ^{2/}	Electricity (Central Station Service) ^{3/}
New England ^{1/}	92	72	87
New York	94	60	94
New Jersey	^{1/}	^{1/}	95
Pennsylvania	90	52	84
Middle Atlantic States	92	56	89
Ohio	91	58	90
Indiana	90	62	85
Illinois	92	72	75
Michigan	92	46	92
Wisconsin	92	59	79
East North Central States	91	60	84
Minnesota	92	63	62
Iowa	93	81	79
Missouri	80	^{1/}	49
North Dakota	93	44	16
South Dakota	91	48	18
Nebraska	93	66	38
Kansas	88	72	42
West North Central States	89	61	51
Maryland & Delaware	86	^{1/}	79
Virginia	77	^{1/}	54
West Virginia	79	^{1/}	51
North Carolina	80	Less than 10	55
South Carolina	76	Less than 10	52
Georgia	76	Less than 10	54
Florida	67	12	59
South Atlantic States	74	12	55
Kentucky	76	24	44
Tennessee	80	16	40
Alabama	67	Less than 10	48
Mississippi	66	Less than 10	33
East South Central States	72	13	41
Arkansas	82	Less than 10	42
Louisiana	68	10	46
Oklahoma	84	32	48
Texas	81	22	56
West South Central States	80	18	50
Mountain States (Ariz., Colo., Idaho, Mont., Nev., New Mex., Utah, Wyo.) ^{1/}	92	53	66
Washington	96	58	95
Oregon	94	54	92
California	93	51	90
Pacific States	94	54	92
United States	83	37	61

^{1/}Sample too small for individual State estimates.

^{2/}Percentage of 8,400 farms reporting to BAE July, 1947.

^{3/}Based on estimates released by Rural Electrification Administration October 2, 1947.